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THE GOSPEL, THE POWER AND WISDOM OF GOD.

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WE PREACH Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them that are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.—1 *Cor.* 1: 23-24.

THE apostle Paul gives in this chapter a graphic delineation of his own ministry. To his brethren at Corinth he presents a bold and clear outline of the gospel he was wont to preach. Though absent from them in body, he would not have them ignorant of his concern for them, nor of his general efforts to make known among the Gentiles "the unsearchable riches of Christ." Hence his care in the opening of this epistle to declare his manner of life, and the great principles he preached as an "ambassador for Christ."

In studying this declaration we can but be impressed with his effort to exalt the Saviour. The name of Jesus appears in some form in almost every verse of this chapter. With the great apostle his name was above every name, full of glad tidings and joy! While Paul might glory in the flesh, if any man hath whereof to glory, yet did he "count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus his Lord."

Let us, brethren and hearers, take our places to-day with the inspired apostle at the foot of the cross, and look upon the crucified Jesus with penitent, adoring, grateful love, while we endeavor to learn some of the lessons contained in the text. "We preach Christ crucified, unto the

Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."

The preaching of "Christ crucified," is the preaching of the gospel plan of salvation through Christ. Christ was the promised Messiah and Saviour, the Anointed of the Lord, but he was crucified and slain. As such he was to be set forth as the "propitiation for sin." In preaching Christ, his death must be made prominent, inasmuch as he died that the sinner might have life. We here see why the apostle attached so much importance to the preaching of "Christ *crucified.*" *The cross,* THE CROSS was to be held up in all his ministrations.

But the preaching of "Christ crucified" was to the "Jews a stumbling-block." The original word here is *skandalon*, from which we derive our English word scandal. This is the meaning. Inasmuch as the Jews were looking for great power and glory in the person of their Messiah, the proclamation that the Messiah had been crucified, that he had died on the cross, covered with opprobium and public disgrace, became a scandal to them. It gave them great offence and was in this sense a "stumbling-stone." They could not endure such a doctrine, but treated it with scorn.

"To the Greeks," or the Gentile world, the preaching of "Christ crucified" was "foolishness." They may have regarded the whole account of Christ; his birth, his life, his works, his death, as a fable; or if receiving the general narrative, they probably saw no connection between the death of "Jesus of Nazareth" and the redemption of the world. Blinded as they were by sin, they failed to discover the transcending beauty of his character, or the matchless wisdom of his instructions. They saw no fitness in the offering he had made of himself, they had no appreciation of the work of the atonement, and therefore the preaching of "Christ crucified" was to them "foolishness."

But while the Jews and the Greeks, as such, might disregard the doctrines of the cross, there nevertheless were those who saw in those doctrines both "the power and the wisdom of God." The apostle speaks of these as the "called," embracing both Jews and Greeks. They were known as the disciples of Christ; they were his followers seeking to do his will. They had been chosen of God, "called" with a holy calling. Their minds and hearts had received a spiritual illumination, and were prepared to discover the power and wisdom of God in the cross. While the Jews were looking for great "power" in their Messiah, and the Greeks sought after "wisdom," the "called" discovered in the cruci-

fied "Jesus of Nazareth" both the "power of God and the wisdom of God."

Let us proceed, then, to consider in this discourse, how the "power and wisdom of God" are made manifest in "Christ crucified."

I. And first, we observe that the antecedents of Christ's appearance upon the earth were eminently adapted to secure such a result. The preparations for his coming made full proof of the "power and the wisdom of God." It must be remembered that "Christ crucified" furnishes the complete elucidation of one great central truth; a truth embracing infinite results, and around which gather the hopes of the world. Christ on the cross makes good the proposition that "without shedding of blood is no remission," but inscribed high upon the cross, in characters of living light, we read: "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." This is the great central truth of the gospel. It is the sun of the system. But the world needed a preparation to receive this truth. In the early ages of his history man was not prepared for the doctrine of the atonement. Nor was it a truth to be made known by a single announcement. It was rather to be unfolded to the world like the on-coming of the morning. The morning star tells us that the night is wearing away, and that the morning is drawing nigh. To that feeble light ray upon ray is added, until at length the day dawns and the sun arises gilding with his radiant beams the eastern horizon.

So of the antecedents of "Christ crucified." The darkness of the moral night that brooded over man after the fall was broken by the promise of a Saviour. And that ray of light was not only preserved, but it steadily increased until the "Sun of Righteousness arose with healing in his wings." The great central truth of which we have here spoken, that there must be blood, the shedding of blood, in order to the remission of sin, was foreshadowed in the early sacrifices of the righteous Abel, and was never lost sight of during all the long period of four thousand years, till the Messiah appeared.

That is an exceedingly imperfect and superficial view of the Old Testament economies that regards them as simply referring to the times in which they flourished. They were preparatory systems; the Patriarchal for the Mosaic, and both for the Christian. The reader of the Old Testament Scriptures, who has failed to discover the gradual unfolding of this doctrine of the atonement, running through them all like the woof of the web, has read them to little advantage. Commencing with the sacrifices of Abel, that truth was ever kept before the world, re-

ceiving in different ages new light, and being revealed from time to time in fairer and clearer lines, until at length it received its full elucidation in the great sacrifice on the cross, whose "blood speaketh better things than that of Abel."

Now we say that in this work of preparation, in these antecedents to the great sacrifice of "Christ crucified," "the power of God and the wisdom of God," were abundantly made manifest.

What but "the wisdom of God," first revealed this truth to men? How came man first possessed of the doctrine of the atonement? Who but God taught him that there must be blood, the shedding of blood, in order to the remission of sins? Surely man by wisdom did not know God, much less the method by which God would reconcile the sinner to himself.

Again, what but the power of God preserved and kept alive this truth during the long, dark ages of the world's history, and amid the changing vicissitudes of so many generations? Yea, more. The power of God not only kept this truth alive, but caused it to be more and more manifest in the earth. Moses turned aside to witness the wonderful power of God in the burning bush. The bush was enveloped in flames, and yet not consumed, because God preserved it. But here is a greater wonder than this. Here is the burning bush of four thousand years, preserved by the wonderful power of God. This truth, that there must be the shedding of blood, this doctrine of the atonement, which is styled by modern cavillers at divine truth, by way of reproach, "the bloody theology," was not only revealed to men by God's infinite wisdom, but was preserved and promulgated among men by his infinite power, from the day of the first promise of the Messiah, until "in the fulness of time" he was lifted up on the cross.

There is open before us here a field more extensive than we can examine in a single discourse, but it will amply repay an examination. We shall be able to trace alike the "wisdom and power of God" in all the antecedents of the great sacrifice on Calvary.

Every scene of trial and discipline to which God's ancient people were subjected, every new truth revealed to them through the old prophets, every sacrifice slain by them on their altars, every offering of burnt incense, every approach to their mercy-seat, every intercession made for them by their high priests, every act of purification, will be found to have been but so many antecedents of the one great offering. They were all preparatory, and culminated at this one point:—"Christ crucified." Well, then, may we sing with the pious Bowring:

"In the cross of Christ we glory,
Towering o'er the wrecks of time;
All the light of sacred story,
Gathers round its head sublime!"

II. But we must farther consider that "the power of God and wisdom of God" are made manifest in "Christ crucified," inasmuch as it is therein provided for the vindication of the divine government, and yet for the pardon and salvation of the guilty. This was the great mission of the Saviour. For this purpose "he endured the cross, despising the shame." He himself declared, "the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost," and an apostle wrote, "this is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners."

Now we say that there was no subject within the entire range of human inquiry and investigation, upon which man's ignorance and weakness were more manifestly seen than this. In his blindness man was unable to discover any means by which the sinner could be saved, and God be justified. He could not even form the conception that such a thing could be; much less could he provide for its accomplishment. The great unsolved problem of the Old World was: "How can a man be just with God?" This was the great question of the sage and the philosopher as they walked abroad amid the works and wonders of creation. The uncounted numbers of religious devotees, following only the dim light of nature, urged this inquiry as they came to the altar of their gods. And even patriarchs and prophets, who saw only the light of the approaching morning from afar, and who longed and hoped to witness the Messiah's advent, but died without the sight; even these good men, men of whom the world was not worthy, sometimes with sad and burdened hearts took up the same iuquiry: "How can a man be just with God?" To human wisdom this question was veiled in impenetrable darkness. If ever answered it must be by some one able to comprehend all the ways of God with man.

And even if this question had been answered, if God had revealed to man the *method* of salvation, that the guilty must be saved through the atoning blood of the innocent, such is human weakness, that man could no more have provided a ransom, than he could have made a world. All the energies of our race, of every age, and nation, and clime, concentrated upon this single point, would fall infinitely short of providing an offering equal to the demands of divine justice. Man is finite, whereas the offering must be infinite.

And here we see "the power of God and the wisdom of God" in "Christ crucified." What man did not know because of his ignorance, God has revealed through the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, and what man could not do because of his weakness, God has wrought out through the blood of the atonement.

The great problem is solved, the great question answered, and man may now know how he may be just with God. Nor is this mere theoretical knowledge. He may learn more than the theory of salvation. He may partake of its rich and inestimable blessings. He may be justified with God and yet God be just. So abundantly is divine wisdom revealed through the cross, as to render it possible for us to throw off the darkness and ignorance of a spiritual night, and to open our eyes upon the unclouded light of day; so wonderfully has God displayed his power there, as to vindicate his own government and show his abhorrence of sin before an intelligent universe, and yet render it possible for the guilty, condemned sinner to be pardoned, justified and saved in his presence.

III. But this leads us to observe again that "the power of God and the wisdom of God" are made manifest in "Christ crucified;" in the mighty changes wrought upon man through the cross. This view of the subject is probably the one particularly before the mind of the apostle. He saw the manifestations of divine wisdom and the displays of divine power in the achievements of the cross won under his own ministry. In the simple preaching of "Christ crucified," wondrous results were attained in the days of the apostle. Whole towns, and cities, and provinces were shaken; old systems of religion, hoary with age, sustained by the strong sympathies and prejudices of the people, and congenial to the depraved tastes and desires of the human heart, were broken down, and in their place Christianity sprang up like a plant of recent but vigorous growth. The preachers of the "crucified" Jesus confronted the strongholds of idolatry and infidelity as well as the massive structure of Judaism, and you all know the results. The cross everywhere triumphed. It "went forth conquering and to conquer." Its trophies were abounding on every side. It achieved its victories on every soil. "Jews and Greeks, barbarians and Scythians, bond and free;" those long familiar with the ritual service of Moses, and the fathers, and the dwellers in the far-off cities of Macedonia, alike bowed before the power of the cross, and learned its lessons of heavenly wisdom.

And these achievements were won, not because the wise, or the mighty, or the noble, had been employed in preaching "Christ crucified," for in the context the apostle has shown that God had rather chosen the "foolish" and the "weak," the "base" and the "despised," that he might the more clearly make manifest "the wisdom and power of God," and that no flesh should glory in his presence. Indeed, such were the achievements of the preaching of the cross in the early ages of the Church, that if we had no other argument in favor of the divine origin of Christianity, from this might be derived an argument all-sufficient to prove it divine. In no other way can we account for the early triumphs of the gospel. God wrought through the truth and made it mighty, alike to enlighten the ignorant and to confound its foes. His servants preached in the demonstration of the spirit and with power, "because God was with them." Their success depended not upon adventitious aid, for such aid was not given them. For the most part they were "unlearned and ignorant men," but few of them having enjoyed the advantages of liberal culture. And yet in their hands, weak and illiterate, and despised as they were, the preaching of "Christ crucified" wrought results that shall never cease to be alike the wonder and the admiration of the world.

But, perhaps, we shall better understand this part of our subject by noting the achievements of the cross in behalf of the individual Christian. We are to remember that it is the "called" to whom "the wisdom and power of God" are made manifest through "Christ crucified." What, then, has the gospel achieved for the individual disciple that reveals these attributes of God?

We may answer, that it has wrought a moral renovation in his nature. We speak of his *nature* in distinction from his outward character. A man's outward character may be exemplary and blameless without this moral renovation. A thousand influences may combine to render it so, and yet his nature be the same as that of other men's, whose life is vicious and degraded. While our outward characters may differ endlessly, according to the ever-varying influences acting upon us, our natures are all depraved and fallen. Our minds are beclouded and our hearts hardened by sin. The depravity of man is universal. It is not only true that all men are depraved, but they are altogether depraved. By nature, ours is a *total depravity*.

Now we say that "the wisdom of God and the power of God" are made manifest on the individual subject of the gospel in the change produced in this depraved nature. The dark and beclouded understanding

is enlightened by divine wisdom, and the hard and degenerate heart is broken, subdued, regenerated by divine power. And there is no intellect too benighted or stultified by sin for the wisdom of God through the cross to reach, neither is there any heart too debased or degraded for the power of God to renew and sanctify. By the Gospel "Saul of Tarsus," the lion-hearted man of blood, who was "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord," and who was "exceedingly mad against them," was changed into the lamb-like follower of "Christ crucified." His nature was changed and he was made "a new creature." The same gospel was able to enlighten the dark-minded "Africaner," and to purify his wicked and corrupt heart that he should become a preacher of righteousness. Under its renewing and transforming influence, "Kothabyu," a man of blood and a leader in scenes of rapine and murder, whose name had become a terror even to hordes of banditti with which his native land was infested, was raised up to become the "*Karen Apostle.*" What achievements have not been won on the individual subjects of renewing grace!

Do you ask again, what the gospel does for the individual Christian that reveals "the wisdom and power of God?" Our answer is, that it essentially changes his relations to God as a moral and accountable being. Without the Saviour, man sustains the relation of the condemned transgressor. He has sinned, and the sentence of death has passed upon him. This sentence is universal and irrevocable. It has "passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Man cannot evade it, he cannot put it off or modify its claims; it stands around him on every side like a flaming fire; it is as high as heaven and as inflexible as the divine law.

But the gospel comes as "the wisdom and power of God" to deliver man from this condemnation and to restore him to the fellowship of his Father. It provides for the pardon of the penitent and the justification of the believer. "There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit. For the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." O what a change is wrought in the relations of the penitent, believing sinner, who is delivered from the "bondage of sin and death," and made free in Christ Jesus. He no longer feels that God is angry with him, but in the "spirit of adoption he draws nigh and cries Abba Father."

The newly converted red man of the forest chose well his illustration when he sought to tell his Christian teacher what grace had done for

him in changing his relations to God. He gathered some dry leaves and placed them in a circle upon the ground. He then sought and found an earth-worm, and placed it in the midst of the circle, and setting fire to the leaves, in a moment the poor worm was enclosed in a circle of fire. It went in one direction, and another, and another, to find some way of escape, but in vain, for the fire was on every side. Wearied with its fruitless efforts it coiled itself up in the centre of the circle and was at rest. At this moment the Indian reached forth his hand and lifted up the poor, helpless worm, saying, "that, sir, is what Jesus Christ has done for me. I was the poor, helpless worm of the dust; the law of God was around me on every side, with its sentence of condemnation like a flame of fire. I sought every way of escape but in vain, and when I was just ready to give up all in despair, when all hope was failing me, Jesus Christ stretched forth his hand to deliver me. That, sir, is what Jesus Christ has done for me."

Do you still urge the inquiry, what does the gospel achieve for the individual subject of it, that illustrates "the wisdom and power of God?" Our answer is, that it inspires new hopes and presents new prospects before him. Without the gospel man lives an alien and a stranger "having no hope and without God in the world," "but a certain fearful looking-for of judgment." When, however, a man becomes the subject of "the wisdom and power of God" "in Christ crucified," he is possessed of a good hope, that takes hold of immortality and eternal life. He is enabled to say, "I know in whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that day."

That we may know what the gospel accomplishes in this regard, we should not compare the man of the world in a Christian community, with the Christian; but rather those who have never heard of the gospel, with the followers of Christ.

What are the hopes of the dark-minded Chinese who are strolling through our streets? Go ask one of them, and he will probably tell you that his spirit will descend with his body into the grave; that for its support his friends will bury with him some *soul currency* (mere frail tissue paper); that from time to time they will burn such currency over his grave, and that the ashes thereof will be transferred to his spirit, with which it will buy for itself spiritual food. If you still press your inquiries, he will tell you that his fear is, that his friends will in time forget him, or that they will all die, and then he shall endure an *unending starvation.* Such are the hopes of the myriads of China, so

dark and cheerless. Or go and ask the millions of India of their hopes for the future, and they will tell you of the doctrine of transmigration; that the soul of man shall exist in other forms; in beasts, birds, reptiles and creeping things. A dying man in India, who had been taught this doctrine, but who felt its unsatisfying nature on the borders of the grave, called a brahmin to his side, and said to him, "where shall I go when I die?" The brahmin told him, according to the doctrine of transmigration, that he should go, perchance, into an elephant, an ox, a bird, a butterfly, a tiny insect. But the dying man continued to ask, "where shall I go then, where next, and where next?" He saw that these hopes promised nothing to satisfy the cravings of an immortal spirit, and he cried in an agony of soul, "*where shall I go last of all?*" The brahmin could not answer. It is not heathenism but the gospel that "brings life and immortality to light."

In contrast with these do you ask the Christian of his hopes and prospects for the future? He does not tell of the unending starvation of the Chinese, nor of the unsatisfactory longings of the millions of India. He points rather to those mansions in his Father's house, which Christ has gone to prepare for him. He tells you of that complete redemption of both soul and body that shall prepare them to be "ever with the Lord." He speaks of the time "when this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality; when shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." He begins even now to attune his voice to the chorus of the skies, and to catch the accents of that song of triumph that shall by and by be sung by an "innumerable company that no man can number;" "O death where is thy sting, O grave where is thy victory? Thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."

1. Since the wisdom of God is so revealed in "Christ crucified," who will refuse to make Christ his teacher?

2. Since the power of God is so made manifest in "Christ crucified," who will refuse to submit at once to Christ, to love and serve him forever?

If we do not put down this printing, it will put us down.--*The Bishops of Queen Mary.*

PAUL'S SERMONS.

Would I describe a preacher such as Paul;
Were he on earth, would hear, approve and own—
Paul should himself direct me; I would trace
His master-strokes, and draw from his design;
I would express him simple, grave, sincere;
In doctrine uncorrupt, in language plain;
And plain in manner, decent, solemn, chaste,
And natural in gesture, much impressed;
Himself as conscious of his awful charge,
And anxious mainly that the flock he feeds
May feel it too; affectionate in look
And tender in address, as well becomes
A messenger of grace to guilty men.
Behold the picture! —[*Cowper.*

I was very much impressed with the remark of a legal gentleman of this city, the other day, about St. Paul, and the more so, because he is a gentleman of a liberal education, of high principles and a discriminating mind. His remark to me was: "Sir, I think the three greatest men that ever lived were Napoleon I, Julius Cæsar and the apostle Paul." Whatever opinions may be held as to the first and second, I hold that he was right as to the third. Among men, I know of none greater than Paul. His intellect, courage, faith, zeal, endurance, works and fame, are surpassed by none of the prophets nor apostles. Have we then any of his works? Rather, is not all Christendom his monument? But who would not give a great deal for an undoubted copy of St. Paul's sermons? Who does not desire to know how he preached, and what he said? And have we not the sermons—the very sermons, preached by this apostle? It seems to me we have several series of his discourses; not indeed of all he said, nor of all his arguments *in extenso;* but of some of his discourses, and that of them we have quite a full and accurate report. We have at least *three* series of the discourses of the great apostle to the Gentiles. The first is found in the "Acts of the Apostles," written by Luke, his traveling companion. This series comprises Luke's report of his *occasional* public discourses, as before Felix and Agrippa, and on Mars' Hill. The second series contains his ordinary, every-day, and every Lord's day discourses, whenever he went into a synagogue, or found Jews or Gentiles willing to hear of Jesus Christ according to the Scriptures. This series is the Gospel according to St. Luke. The proof of this, and it is perfectly satisfactory, is this: The writer of the Acts of the Apostles, and of the Gospel, according to Luke, is the same person, and both histories are addressed to the same indi-

vidual; for, though *Theophilus* as an appellation means "friend of God," yet this term is here no doubt the name of a well known person, who was acquainted with the rise of Christianity and with the affairs of Syria, Greece and Italy, at that time. From *Luke* i: 2-3, it is seen that Luke was not an eye-witness of the miracles of Jesus, nor was he acquainted with his sayings from his own personal attendance upon his ministry; yet he had a "perfect understanding of all things from the very first." Now if the writer of the Gospel, according to Luke, was not one of the *seventy*, nor one of the *two* that met our Lord on the way to Emmaus; how then does it happen that this Gospel is received into our canon as of equal authority with the other Gospels? The answer is: 1. This Gospel has the same internal, external and collateral evidences of inspiration that we find in the others. 2. The Church Catholic, that is, the Holy Universal Church, without hesitation or doubt, has received this Gospel from the earliest period of its history. And 3. The Church has so received it, because it was written by the companion of Paul, who wrote also the "Acts of the Apostles." And the testimony of the fathers, moreover, on this subject is, that the "Gospel according to Luke," and "the Acts of the Apostles," were published, that is, circulated in manuscript, during the life-time of Paul, Peter and John, and received by them as inspired writings. And the fathers, also, almost without an exception, say, that "the Gospel according to Luke," is the Gospel as preached daily by Paul, and written down from his lips by Luke. Irenæus expressly says, "Luke, the companion of Paul, put down in a book the Gospel preached by him." Origen and Jerome say precisely the same thing. It is also the testimony of the fathers that Paul approved of the Gospel by Luke, as a faithful record of what he preached. The *third* series of this apostle's discourses are his letters or epistles to individuals and churches, which though thus addressed, are nevertheless the property of the whole Church of God. They are catholic in their doctrines and principles. And thus it is that we have the sermons preached by Paul in the first age of the Christian Church; the very sermons and specimens of the very discourses that were so powerful in defending the faith, and for the conversion of both Jews and Gentiles. We have some of his discourses on various public occasions and under extraordinary circumstances. And then we have specimens of his ordinary daily and weekly discourses. And where, brethren, is there a manual or a model for us like the discourses of Paul? O for a race of preachers of the Word like Paul, full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and mighty in the Scriptures, always showing unto the people the way of salvation ac-

cording to the Scriptures of God. Paul was an earnest, logical, argumentative, experimental, full-hearted, pathetic, powerful preacher of the Divine Word.

There stands the messenger of truth; there stands
The legate of the skies!—His theme divine,
His office sacred, his credentials clear.
By him the violated law speaks out
Its thunders; and by him, in strains as sweet
As angels use, the Gospel whispers peace.
He 'stablishes the strong, restores the weak,
Reclaims the wanderer, binds the broken heart,
And, armed himself in panoply complete,
Of heavenly temper, furnishes with arms
Bright as his own, and trains, by every rule
Of holy discipline, to glorious war,
The sacramental host of God's elect! —[*Cowper.*

SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER.

This epistle is remarkable for the particularity with which the author alludes to the facts, circumstances and signs of his times and of himself, and associates; and for the energy with which he inculcates holiness of heart and life, and exhorts us to beware of the delusions of those who denied the Lord Jesus, or perverted his Gospel. It is true, there are a few, as there were in Jerome's day, who still call in question the genuiness and divine authority of this epistle. But to all such we say, we receive it as a part of the Holy Scriptures of God, 1. Because we have it in the best manuscripts, as in the *Codex Vaticanus*, which in the judgment of Tischendorf and the best authorities, is to be referred to the middle of the fourth century—to the very age of St. Jerome. Prof. Tischendorf, now in the service of the Russian government for the very purpose of searching for old manuscripts of the Scriptures, reports that he has found in Egypt another manuscript of the New Testament as old and as perfect as that of the Vatican, if not more so. I have this very evening examined a copy of the *Codex Vaticanus*, just received at one of our book stores, published from the copy of Cardinal Mai; a work of great value to biblical interpreters. All these manuscripts and versions are in favor of the divine authority of this epistle.

2. In St. Jerome's day, that is, in the fourth century, this question was raised and settled. The time and circumstances were then favorable to the strictest examination of the matter, and the result was that this epistle was declared a part of the canon. The Church was then and ever has been scrupulous about admitting the divine authority of ancient writings; but the Church did then, after the closest investigation, admit

this epistle, and it has been so received ever since, except by a few. Clement of Rome, Hermas, Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, Athanasius, Cyril of Jerusalem, the early council of Laodicea, Jerome, Epiphanius, Augustine, and almost all the learned expositors of Holy Scripture from the infancy of the Church to this day, have received it as the genuine and divinely inspired production of the apostle Simon Peter. The *internal evidence* is also strongly in its favor. The main object of this epistle was to confirm those addressed in his first epistle, in the instructions and doctrines of the Gospel as they had first received it, and to put them on their guard against the presumption, rashness and errors of false teachers and scoffers that abounded in those days. This epistle is full of warning and exhortations, eminently suited to our own times. And blessed is he that hath an ear to hear.

Elders' Prayer-Meetings.—We observe with much pleasure, and regard it as one of the pleasing signs of the times, that our religious papers from Scotland and Ireland, contain numerous advertisements in several of the large towns for meetings of the elders of different congregations, for conference and prayer. These meetings are indications of a growing earnestness on the subject of religion in the churches, that we are persuaded must have a happy result. It can hardly fail to be followed by an increased attention to the regular ministrations on the Lord's Day; and as the elders and Sunday-school teachers, and heads of families, become more and more alive to the great interests of Christ's kingdom, so the pulpit will become more and more powerful. The elders in attendance at our late Assembly, held frequent prayer-meetings during its session, and published an address to their brethren on the subject, which we shall publish as soon as we can lay hands on it.

Presbyterian Ministers.—From the Historical Almanac of Mr. Wilson, we learn that there are over nine thousand ordained ministers in the several branches of the Presbyterian Church. When we consider the learning, influence and moral strength which on an average they may fairly be supposed to represent, we have no mean army. If their prayers were all as powerful as queen Mary thought John Knox's were—more to be dreaded than an army of twenty thousand pikes—then we should hope the cause of truth would prevail exceedingly. We love to hear preachers of the Gospel called by the apostolic appellation, ministers of God, servants of Christ. For in such service is their glory and strength.

MY TIMES ARE IN THY HAND.

FATHER, I know that all my life
Is portioned out for me,
And the changes that will surely come
I do not fear to see;
But I ask Thee for a present mind
Intent on pleasing Thee.

I ask Thee for a thoughtful love,
Through constant watching wise,
To meet the glad with joyful smiles,
And to wipe the weeping eyes;
And a heart at leisure from itself,
To sooth and sympathize.

I would not have the restless will
That hurries to and fro,
Seeking for some great thing to do,
Or secret thing to know;
I would be treated as a child,
And guided where I go.

Wherever in the world I am,
In whatsoe'er estate,
I have a fellowship with hearts
To keep and cultivate;
And a work of lowly love to do,
For the Lord on whom I wait.

So I ask Thee for the daily strength,
To none that ask denied,
And a mind to blend with outward life,
While keeping at thy side,
Content to fill a little space,
If Thou be glorified.

And if some things I do not ask
In my cup of blessing be,
I would have my spirit filled the more
With grateful love to Thee—
And careful, less to serve Thee much,
Than to please Thee PERFECTLY.

There are briars besetting every path,
Which call for patient care;
There is a cross in every lot,
And an earnest need for prayer;
But a lowly heart that leans on Thee
Is happy anywhere.

In a service which thy love appoints,
There are no bonds for me;
For my secret heart is taught "the truth"
That makes thy children "free;"
And a life of self-renouncing love,
Is a life of liberty.

—*Hymns of the Ages.*

BOARDS IN THE CHURCH.

We look upon our Boards as committees of the Church, and that whatever they do, is therefore done for the Church, and if directed by the Church, or approved by it, is done by the Church. The experiments made have been tried long enough, and are numerous enough, we think, to demonstrate beyond reasonable doubt, that voluntary societies can not be trusted with doing the work of the Church. Nor do we believe that it was ever contemplated by the Founder of the Church that any part of the work He committed to it, should be done even by his people outside of it, either by voluntary or State institutions. The Church is a perfect organization. It is competent to execute the commands of its blessed head. It seems to us, then, injustice to the Church, for its members to do through voluntary, irresponsible societies, what they can and should do through their ecclesiastical agencies. Voluntary associations may have done good, but there is no necessity for them, nor are they safe. The Church of Christ is God's own institution for doing good to men. Our New School brethren have given unmistakeable evidence that they are with us on this subject. They have learned by experience not to trust in voluntary associations. The Reformed Dutch Church has already withdrawn from the American Home and Foreign Missionary Societies. The day is not distant when there will be but one voluntary society in America that will have the confidence of the Churches. We mean, of course, the American Bible Society. The Catholics and Episcopalians have, as a rule, eschewed all agencies outside of the Church. And in this, we think, they have honored the Church. We do not find in the New Testament any authority for believing that the Church of Christ is a defective organization, and must call on Cæsar to help her do her Lord's work. What part of the proceedings of our General Assemblies is more interesting than the reports of the various Boards. On this point the St. Louis *Presbyterian*, speaking of the accounts of the several Boards, says: "One tells what it has done for the poor heathens of China, India, Africa, North and South America. Another tells how it has sent Gospel ministers to the little bands of disciples scattered through the wilderness and over the prairies of our wide frontier. Another tells of the number of devoted young men whom it has aided to qualify to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. Another tells of the precious seed it has scattered, in books and tracts, and by the hand of colporteurs, in city and village, in

mansion and cabin, far and wide over the land. And another tells how many churches it has helped to build, how many a struggling flock it has extricated from otherwise hopeless embarrassment, and how many a devoted minister's heart it has lightened of a crushing load. There was scarcely anything in the late Assembly which presented to our minds a grander conception of the glory of the Presbyterian Church, than this: The combined account of the stewardship of the Boards. Each of these Boards is under the management of men of devout spirit intelligence, high executive ability and prudence. All of them have been carried through the late financial crisis without embarrassment. In none of them are the salaried officers extravagantly paid, in none are there supernumerary employees. The funds are wisely managed, and appropriations judiciously distributed upon an impartial estimate of the relative merits of applications, in the light of the information submitted." To our mind this is the sublime work of the Church of the living God. We desire, as the members of the several Boards themselves desire, that the Church through the General Assembly shall keep a strict watch over the Boards, and that the annual reports shall always be full and frankly subjected to such examination as will inspire the Church with confidence in their management and at the same time do full justice to the able and excellent men who are laboring in their various bureaus. We doubt, whether, in proportion to their number, as much learning, zeal, talent, piety and self-denial, can be found in any other part of the Church, as in her Boards. The Church should therefore encourage and coöperate with her Boards. They are the leaders of her several *corps d' armeé.* Whatever tends to weaken confidence in them, demoralizes our hosts and strengthens the enemy. And as it is always easier to tear down than build up, we should be cautious about changes and new measures.

What the People Read.—The last monthly report of the Mercantile Library of the city of San Francisco, shows that only five volumes on the subject of religion have been used, while in romance, nine hundred and eighty; biography, one hundred and fifty-two; travels, one hundred and thirty-four; history, one hundred and eighteen: belles lettres, one hundred and fifteen; science, eighty-two, and poetry sixty-nine, form the summary.

DUELLING.

In our proper place as an expounder of the divine law, we have frequently attempted to explain the Divine Word, and to enforce its solemn teachings against any violation of the moral law as summarily comprehended in the Ten Commandments. But it is amazing to see the false issues that are now rife among us, and the sectional and unmeaning rage of certain persons in regard to a late most unfortunate and ever to be lamented occurrence. But it seems to us appropriate to publish the following extract from the charge of Lord Bacon, as His Majesty's Attorney-General, touching duels, upon information in the Star Chamber against Priest and Wright, who were convicted and sentenced to fine and imprisonment for sending and bearing a challenge to fight a duel, by decree *In Camera Stellata coram concilio*, 26 *Januarii*, 11 *Jac. Regis.* The whole charge of Lord Bacon, and the decree of the court, are worthy of careful study. We have space, however, only for the following extract from the charge:

"For the mischief itself, it may please your lordships to take into consideration that when revenge is once extorted out of the magistrate's hands, contrary to God's ordinance, "mihi vindicta, ego retribuam," and every man shall bear the sword, not to defend, but to assail; and private men begin once to presume to give law to themselves, and to right their own wrongs, no man can foresee the danger and inconveniences that may arise and multiply thereupon. It may cause sudden storms in court, to the disturbance of his majesty, and unsafety of his person; it may grow from quarrels to bandying, and from bandying to trooping, and so to tumult and commotion; from particular persons to dissension of families and alliances; yea, to national quarrels, according to the infinite variety of accidents, which fall not under foresight; so that the State by this means shall be like to a distempered and imperfect body, continually subject to inflammations and convulsions.

Besides, certainly, both in divinity and in policy, offences of presumption are the greatest. Other offences yield and consent to the law that it is good, not daring to make defence, or to justify themselves; but this offence expressly gives the law an affront, as if there were two laws, one a kind of gown-law, and the other a law of reputation, as they term it; so that Paul's and Westminster, the pulpit and the courts of justice, must give place to the law, as the king speaketh in his proclamation, of ordinary tables, and such reverend assemblies; the year-

books, and statute-books, must give place to some French and Italian pamphlets, which handle the doctrine of duels, which, if they be in the right, "transeamus ad illa," let us receive them, and not keep the people in conflict and distraction between two laws.

Again, my lords, it is a miserable effect, when young men, full of towardness and hope, such as the poets call "auroræ filii," sons of the morning, in whom the expectation and comfort of their friends consisteth, shall be cast away and destroyed in such a vain manner; but much more it is to be deplored, when so much noble and genteel blood should be spilt upon such follies, as, if it were adventured in the field in service of the king and realm, were able to make the fortune of a day, and to change the fortune of a kingdom. So as your lordships see what a desperate evil this is; it troubleth peace, it disfurnisheth war, it bringeth calamity upon private men, peril upon the State, and contempt upon the law.

Touching the causes of it; the first motive, no doubt, is a false and erroneous imagination of honor and credit; therefore, the king, in his last proclamation, doth most aptly and excellently call them bewitching duels. For, if one judge of it truly, it is no better than a sorcery that enchanteth the spirits of young men, that bear great minds with a false show, "species falsa;" and a kind of satanical illusion and apparition of honor against religion, against law, against moral virtue, and against the precedents and examples of the best times and the valiantest nations; as I shall tell you by-and-by, when I shall show you the law of England is not alone in this point.

But then the seed of this mischief being such, it is nourished by vain discourses, and green and unripe conceits, which, nevertheless, have so prevailed, as, though a man were staid and sober-minded, and a right believer, touching the vanity and unlawfulness of these duels; yet the stream of vulgar opinion is such, as it imposeth a necessity upon men of value to conform themselves, or else there is no living or looking upon men's faces; so that we have not to do, in this case, so much with particular persons, as with unsound and depraved opinions, like the dominations and spirits of the air, which the Scripture speaketh of.

Hereunto may be added, that men have almost lost the true notion and understanding of fortitude and valor. For fortitude distinguisheth of the grounds of quarrels, whether they be just; and not only so, but whether they be worthy; and setteth a better price upon men's lives, than to bestow them idly; nay, it is weakness and disesteem of a man's self, to put a man's life upon such liedger performances; a man's

life is not to be trifled away; it is to be offered up and sacrificed to honorable services, public merits, good causes, and noble adventures. It is in expense of blood, as it is in expense of money; it is no liberality to make a profusion of money upon every vain occasion, nor no more is it fortitude to make effusion of blood, except the cause be of worth. And thus much for the causes of this evil."

"WELL STRICKEN IN YEARS."

This is the description of Sarah and Abraham and of John the Baptist, in the divine word, in reference to their age. An examination of the original reveals some thoughts that are perhaps not apparent from the first reading of the phrase. The words are emphatic—*well stricken in years;* that is, *stricken*, advanced in length of days; but it is a happy advance, well advanced in the journey, and still having strength to go on and to hold out and endure to the end. It is not merely that these worthies were old; but that they have grown gray in in the ways of righteousness. They had run well the larger half of the race. They were well and safely advanced two-thirds of the way, and still possessed of strength to run the remaining part, and come out victors at the end. Well advanced, but not exhausted; still pursuing and with strength enough left to hold on and win the blissful goal. Aged friend, is this true of you? Happy, unspeakably happy, then, is your lot. He who has fed you all the way along, will not fail you now. Let the remembrance of his loving kindness to you in the wilderness, strengthen you when you come to go down into Jordan's cold flood. He will not fail you then. He does not preserve you through life to forsake you at death. His grace is sufficient, abundantly sufficient. Cast your cares upon him for he careth for you. Let not your hearts be troubled. Ye believe in God, says your great Redeemer, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go, I will come again and take you to myself, that where I am ye may be also. And because I live, ye shall live also; and where I am, there shall ye be also, that you may behold my glory, the glory which I had with the Father, before the world was.

"My God, my everlasting hope,
I live upon thy truth;
Thine hands have held my childhood up,
And strengthened all my youth.

Cast me not off when strength declines,
When hoary hairs arise;
And round me let thy glory shine,
Whene'er thy servant dies.

When I lie buried deep in dust,
My flesh shall be thy care;
These withered limbs with thee I trust,
To raise them strong and fair,"

Written for the Expositor.

THE PILGRIM SOLDIER'S LAST MARCH.

BY REV. DR. BURROWES, OF SACRAMENTO.

And when thy tent is struck, and the last march
Of life awaits thee, through death's fearful shades.

On a calm Sabbath afternoon in June, I was sitiing at the front door open towards the setting sun, reading the closing part of the Pilgrim's Progress. Occasionally my eye was raised to the humming-bird that hovered along the honey-suckle which was in luxuriant growth and full bloom, the evergreen and woodbine, on either side of the door. The later roses were still fresh; in front was a field of heavy clover covered with blossoms scenting the air; on the right was a field of wheat whitening for the harvest. The weariness resulting from preaching and from a ride through the sun to the afternoon appointment, caused me to fall asleep. The current of my thoughts gave a coloring to my dream.

I saw the pilgrim soldier resting in the land of Beulah. He seemed to be gathering strength for the last march that lay before him. Around him spread a meadow of green pastures and still waters, with lilies and the rose of Sharon; he was lying on a bed of grass and flowers by the side of a fountain of living waters, his shield resting against the citron tree which spread over him its delightful shade, (*Song* 2-3.) while his eye was fixed with quiet, intense earnestness on the heavenly city now full in view. At a short distance beyond, this ridge with its pure, clear, bracing air, its fresh landscape and crystal springs, sunk abruptly into a wide, deep valley. Far away across this valley, there was a region of indescribable beauty, such as eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, neither hath the heart of man conceived; along the swellihg highlands of which lay the Holy City—its walls, and domes, and bat-

tlements, and towers, and steeples, purely white, combining the beauty of spotless marble and undazzling light. The intervening valley, low, and dreary, and desolate, was covered with dark clouds, on which, as you looked down from the brow where the pilgrim was lying, you could see the lightning flash, at intervals, with a quick, angry vigor, and hear the thunder roll. Through this valley ran a river, dark, deep, wide, and fearful, as though a stormy strait between two tempestuous seas over which hung the darkness of a clouded polar night; its heavy roar might be heard in the distance, with other sounds unusual to human ears. Yet down through this region of darkness, and clouds, and terrors, the lurking place of all those spirits and foes to holiness and peace, which love darkness rather than light, lay the only path to the heavenly city.

As the soldier was gazing steadfastly on the glories lying beyond, I heard the soft tones of a trumpet, as though near him. He knew the call, sprang to his feet, and took his shield. At the same time I saw a star falling from heaven, throwing out many scintillations, and drawing after it a trail of light. It came down directly before him in the air; and as it hung there a brilliant flame, it gradually faded away; and I noticed it had been an angel sent to warn him to arise and go forward. To the pilgrim the command was most welcome—"*Forward! forward to thy crown!*"

When he stood on the verge of the precipice, and was going down along the defile into the fearful ravines shut in by rugged cliffs, there was nnusual vigor in his tread, and unusual animation in his eye. On his helmet burned a light brighter than that which a goddess kindled on the armor of Diomedes—

> When on his helm and shield a radiance burned,
> Like the autumnal star which brilliant beams,
> Just risen from the ocean's deep blue waves.

His shield was made of that which is better than gold; yea, than much fine gold; than silver purified in a furnace of earth, refined seven times; more precious than Prince Arthur's shield, which was

> "Not made of steel, nor of enduring brass,
> But all of diamond perfect pure and clean,
> One massy entire mould hewn out of rock
> Of adamant;"

which was too bright for any eye to gaze on, which could not be pierced

by any weapon, the radiance of which turned enemies to stone. His shield was brought from a higher heaven than that of Achilles, covered over with the emblematic devices of that truth which is the object of faith, engraved by the hand of Him who wrote the law on the two tables of diamond on Sinai, capable of quenching all the fiery darts of the wicked; thi shield, thus precious and imperishable as the heaven-born truth which formed its materials, then burned "as a torch of fire in a sheaf." The countenance of the pilgrim, like that of Stephen, shone as it had been the face of an angel. Like Moses, who "wist not that the skin of his face shone," he seemed to be unconscious of the glory and grandeur of his appearance, which made me think of the Angel of the Apocalypse standing in the sun. The promise was fulfilled to him, "Thy righteousness shall go forth as brightness, and thy salvation as a lamp that burneth." (*Isa.* lxii: 1.) I felt that—

"The men of grace have found
Glory begun below."

I could see around him, though he saw them not, a troop of attending spirits with shields and helmets, such as those worn by the angels who stand as sentinels at the gates of pearl opening into the Holy City. They appeared of the number of those seen by the young man when his eyes were opened, and he saw "The mountain full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha."—2 *Kings* vi: 17. The way was steep, a narrow defile between precipitous and craggy mountains along which the thunder reverberated with appalling rolls. There was the mount that burned with fire, and blackness, and darkness, and tempest. The gloom thrown over the deep ravine by the towering rocks, was settled into heavy darkness by the lowering clouds; while shouts were heard, as though of a hostile host, enough to appal the stoutest heart. I noticed that his cheek turned pale; he compressed his lips, and tightened his grasp on his sword and shield; yet did his eye grow brighter, and his tread more earnest as he steadily went forward. A voice was murmuring in his ears, "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness." *Isa.* xli: 10.

As the darkness thus grew deeper, a soft white light was moving above and before him; it was of the same that had gone before Israel out of Egypt, and formed their rear-guard through the sea. It seemed also like the star which had gone before the wise men to Bethlehem; it

was bright like the morning star. Here the promise was fulfilled, "My presence shall go with thee."—*Ex.* xxxiii: 14. Besides this, he was encompassed with a cloud of soft, undazzling light, as a moving dome or tent above, below, and round about on every side. What Virgil's imagination only conceived of, was here reduced to glorious reality, when he represents Æneas and his companion as having a bright cloud spread around them by his goddess mother, in which they moved invisible and unharmed through a multitude of enemies. This hollow sphere of light encompassed him as a shield. I thought of the words, "Thou, Lord, wilt bless the righteous; with favor wilt thou compass him as with a shield."—*Ps.* v:12. "For I, saith the Lord, will be unto her a wall of fire round about, and will be the glory in the midst of her."—*Zech.* ii: 5. "Then shall thy light spring forth as the morning; thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward."—*Isa.* lviii: 8.

As the pilgrim soldier was thus advancing along this straight and narrow way, here hemmed in by beetling precipices, and lying through the deepest chasms of the valley of the shadow of death, he saw through the gloom rendered visible by flashes of lightning, his path blocked up by a host that filled it as one solid mass farther than his eye pierced. It was an array fearful to the soul, and of all those things—ghosts, apparitions, fiends, angels of vengeance from the bottomless pit, ministers of a guilty conscience, spectres; things which when existing here on earth, in the imagination only, are most appalling to the heart of man. One of these alone was enough to cow the bravest of men—to make Belshazzar tremble even with the finger writing his doom; to appal the dauntless Macbeth even by its shadow; to make the hardy Richard start in terror from his boding dream. Now, this solitary pilgrim was to encounter here, in these domains of death, not the shadows, the imaginary shapes of these things, but the dread reality—all these ghastly beings in their panoply of terror, marshaled in one limitless, spectral host. At their head, directly before him, stood one who is their fitting leader. That shape,

> "If shape it might be called, that shape had none,
> Distinguishable in member, joint or limb,
> Or substance might be called that shadow seemed,
> For each seemed either; black it stood as night,
> Fierce as ten furies, terrible as hell,
> And shook a dreadful dart; what seemed his head
> The likeness of a kingly crown had on."

Here, then, he was front to front with the king of terrors. For a moment there was a slight falter in his bearing; but in an instant he regained the calm courage of his advance, as a reassuring voice, like that to Moses from the burning bush, came to him from that guiding presence or star, "Fear not; I will help thee. Look unto me and be ye saved."—*Isa.* xli: 13; xlv: 22. He looked unto Jesus and was lightened; and he delivered him from all his fears.—*Ps.* xxxiv: 5. As he looked, that presence was "a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light in the night to these."—*Ex.* xiv: 20. Its front was terrible with the cherubim and flaming sword that had blazed at the east of Eden. He heard a voice also saying, "Fear ye not, stand still and see the salvation of God."—*Ex.* xiv: 13. "The Lord also thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave his voice; hailstones and coals of fire. Yea, he sent out his arrows and scattered them; and he shot out lightnings and discomfitted them."—*Ps.* xviii: 13. At the first blaze of the Presence unfolding by a burst from the darkness, the ghastly king of terrors dropped his dart, and fell as Dagon before the Ark of the Lord; his hosts were panic-stricken; and at the noise of the thunder they hastened away, as ghosts before the breaking dawn.

The pilgrim soldier filled with amazement and love, felt "The Lord is good, a strong-hold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that trust in him. But with an overrunning flood he will make an utter end of the place thereof, and darkness shall pursue his enemies."—*Nahum* i: 7. The valley before him was cleared of that terrible host and light was breaking in along it from the farther end. The shadow of death was turning into morning. Before him lay the powerless form of Death crushed and despoiled of his terrors. He passed on with the tread of victory; and I heard his voice in praise. He sung "the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, 'Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty. Who shall not fear thee, O God, and glorify thy name. Death is swallowed up in victory! O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.'" *Rev.* xv: 3; 1 *Cor.* xv: 55.

He thus went forward till he came to the river. The current was strong and angry; the flood rolled along with a power which no mortal strength could struggle with and get safe over. Efforts were constantly making at other points by persons to launch themselves across in boats, which they had devised under the promptings of their own righteous-

ness; but in every instance they perished as hopelessly as the boats to which the guilty betook themselves in the flood, when the Ark only, God's appointed means, survived. None could approach the river at this point, but the persons who had come down along this straight and narrow way. It was still shut in by the precipitous mountains, which here formed a bold and dangerous shore. There was a single opening down to the gloomy waters. He was now standing on a rock by which the flood swept on with angry roar. What must he do? How shall he go farther? His own strength is weakness in struggling with such a current. One thing still supported him—the Star, the Presence, was yet before him. He looked and said, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me."—*Ps.* xxiii: 4. At that moment he heard the same voice which spoke to Moses at the Red Sea, saying to him, "Go forward!"—*Ex.* xiv:15.

Though the first step must cause him to fall from the rock on whose edge he was already standing, his faith led him not to hesitate. Like the father of the faithful, he went forth, not knowing whither he went. *Heb.* xi: 8. When lo! as his foot left the rock, and to human eyes, he must sink—his mortal form fell from him; his earthly house of this tabernacle was dissolved. He stood forth a pure spirit, "like the angels," clothed in fine linen, pure and bright, which is the righteousness of saints.—*Rev.* xix: 8. His eyes were opened on a new world; he saw things which, like those seen by St. Paul in Paradise, it is not possible for a man to utter. He noticed that the rock on which he had been standing, was one precious stone, purer than the diamond, more imperishable than adamant. It had been laid by the Lord "for a foundation, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation."—*Isa.* xxviii: 16. And while "the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding-place;" he that trusteth to this, shall never be confounded.

(To be continued.) P.208.

The Church is so preserved in the world that it suddenly arises from the dead; in short, the preservation of the Church brings with it almost daily miracles. Its life cannot continue without many resurrections.—*Calvin.*

Written for the Expositor.

SELF EXAMINATION.

There are difficulties, and the Christian feels them when sitting down to examine into his own state, and as his many failings and weaknesses rise up before his mind and accumulate upon his conscience, he is ready to sink, if indeed he sees no helping hand to save him from the condemnation under which he is suffering. Self examination may become a sort of penance, and the Christian may dwell upon his sinfulness and mourn over his lost condition as a sort of religious duty which may count him something, as he shall be weighed in the scale of God's law. But does God require of us any such self-torture? And is it right to think thus of Him, that anything we can do shall make us any more acceptable to him?

Jesus Christ stands ready to take every particle of guilt from us, and rid us of its penalty. He is waiting to do all this for us; yes, even knocking at the door of our hearts, and trying to gain admittance. But instead of looking at Christ, and so giving ourselves unto his hands to be cured of every malady, we look at self and keep thinking of our own state of vileness; thus do we sit in darkness, for looking at self brings no light, or joy, or peace. The man who has fallen into a ditch of muddy water, with help near hand, stands in the water looking at the mud and mire with which he is covered, and mourns over his sad plight instead of reaching up his hands to be lifted out, is not more foolish than the Christian who sits down mourning over his sinful state, rather than looking up to Christ who stands ready to take him in all his vileness, and do for him all he may need to have done.

Had the children of Israel when bitten by the fiery serpents, kept their eyes fixed on their wounds, instead of looking away from their wounds to the brazen serpent uplifted for their deliverance, could they have been healed? And can we, who have suffered from the wound of our enemy, expect to be saved from the effects of our disease, if we look at our wounds, and continue looking at our own malady, rather than at the uplifted cross, and at Him who hath borne our iniquities for us?

M. M. B.

Sin, Dirt and the Devil.—It is right to hate sin, dirt and the devil.

APOSTOLIC PREACHING, ITS METHOD AND ADVANTAGES.

PREACHED AT THE OPENING OF THE SYNOD OF ALTA CALIFORNIA (NEW SCHOOL), IN THE HOWARD STREET CHURCH, SAN FRANCISCO, TUESDAY EVENING, OCT. 4TH, 1859, BY REV. S. S. HARMON, OF SONOMA, MODERATOR OF THE SYNOD.

Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews; and Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three Sabbath days reasoned with them out of the Scriptures, opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ. And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.—*Acts* xvii: 1-4.

Ministers of God, Elders and Deacons of the Churches, and Brethren in Christ:

THE SUBJECT about to be presented for your consideration, is one which has engaged some of my most anxious thoughts for several years. If I shall speak somewhat positively, it will be because I am satisfied that the things presented are in the main correct. If any one shall be reproved by them, he may console himself with the reflection, if it be any consolation, that the preacher of the present hour can bear him company.

But whatever may be my own shortcomings, in this respect, I feel constrained to volunteer some hints for the consideration of those who are not trammeled by the difficulties, nor encompassed by the infirmities that beset myself.

And, without stopping to speak of the other things of interest contained in the text, I shall proceed to offer some observations:

First. On the *method* of the apostle's preaching; and

Secondly. On its *peculiar advantages.*

I. The *mode* of the apostle's preaching was *expository.* This is briefly and clearly stated in the text. He "*reasoned with them out of the Scriptures;*" i. e., out of the Scriptures of the Old Testament, for the New was not then written. He "reasoned with them out of the Scriptures, *opening and alleging*"—or rather, which is warranted by the Greek—*expounding and quoting them as proof* that his doctrine in regard to the Messiah, was true. His great object seemed to be, to get before his hearers the *meaning* of the Scriptures, and then enforce them. He appeared to think that if they only understood *Moses and the Prophets*, they would then be constrained to acknowledge Christ as the Messiah.

Evidently, he regarded the Scriptures as the grand and essential instrument of God, in the conviction and conversion, the sanctification and salvation of men. Hence we hear him telling the Corinthians that it was "*by manifestation of the truth*," i. e., by preaching or expounding it, "he commended himself o every man's conscience in the sight of God." And hence he declares in other places, that the "Holy Scriptures are able to make" believers "wise unto salvation;" "able to build them up, and to give them an inheritance among them that are sanctified." "Study," says he to Timothy, a young ambassador of Christ, "*Study* to show thyself approved unto God, *rightly dividing the Word of Truth. But shun profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science, falsely so called, for they will increase unto more ungodliness.*" And, then again, in another place, with what solemn and overwhelming urgency does he adjure Timothy on the same subject: "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing, PREACH THE WORD."

The apostle did not seem at all anxious to advance anything of his *own*, nor anything *new*, except by direct inspiration; but only to explain and illustrate the Scriptures, which the world then possessed. And in all his public discourses, in some of them most prominently, this appears to have been his great aim.

And such was the aim of the other apostles and their holy *confreres*. And preëminently was this the character of our Lord's preaching. Of this we have many most happy illustrations. (See *Luke* iv and xxiv.)

But enough has been said to show that what is commonly called the *expository* method of preaching, is the *Scriptural* method—the method of the prophets, (see *Neh.* viii) of Christ, and his apostles. That such also was the general method of the early fathers, and of all the preachers of Christianity for the first three or four centuries, could be shown by the most ample testimony.

Regular and thorough exposition was also the general practice of the Reformers, such as Luther, Calvin and Melancthon. So also the Puritan and Nonconformist divines produced a regular course of Bible exposition, one part of every Lord's day. And some of the most eminent preachers of the last and present century made this a prominent part of their public ministrations. Matthew Henry expounded to his charge the entire Bible twice. Dr. Hopkins of our own country, went through the entire volume of the Scriptures, in regular exposition, *three times*, in the course of his ministry. Dr. John M. Mason, whose genius and whose power as a preacher were never surpassed in this country, in his

farewell discourse to the Murray Street Church, in the city of New York, thus bears testimony to his own practice in this matter, and to his conviction of its utility :

"Do not choose a man who always preaches from insulated texts. I care not how powerful and eloquent he may be in handling them. The effect of his power and eloquence will be to banish a taste for the Word of God, and to substitute the preacher in its place. You have been accustomed to hear that Word preached to you in its connection. Never permit that practice to drop. Foreign churches call it lecturing; and, when done with discretion, I can assure you that, while it is of all exercises the most difficult for the preacher, it is, in the same proportion, the most profitable for you." (*Princeton Review*, 1838.)

Moreover, it ought to be borne in mind by all good and loyal Presbyterians, that our Directory for Worship (chap. vi) recommends that "large portions of Scripture be sometimes expounded, and particularly improved for the instruction of the people in the meaning and use of the Sacred Oracles"

Not a few, and among them the celebrated Dr. Calamy, took the same ground and strongly advocated this practice in the Westminster Assembly, that formed our Confession of Faith. They insisted that "it was no part of a minister's duty to read the Scriptures in public *without exposition.*" (*Princeton Review*, 1838.)

The repeated deliverances of the General Assembly on this subject, bear testimony to the strong convictions of the Presbyterian Church of this country as to the demand for a return, in part at least, to the ancient and more Scriptural method of preaching. (See *Assembly's Digest*, Baird's Collection, p. 64 and 74.)

The late General Assembly at Indianapolis, in its Narrative of the State of Religion, furnishes us with the following significant fact, and an appropriate recommendation in view of it. "Several Presbyteries mention specially *expository preaching* as a means which has been employed with evident good results. The Assembly would take this opportunity of recommending to the ministers under its direction, attention to this mode of preaching, so well adapted to do honor to the Word of God, and which the fathers of a preceding age employed with such eminent good effect."*

* Besides the article in the Princeton Review, already quoted, which is an exceedingly able one, and ought to be published as a tract and read by all our ministers and churches, I was glad to find, and esteem it as a pleasure to acknowledge, some valuable and forcible thoughts on this subject by a learned author and eloquent divine of this coast, in the Introduction to his recent work on *Esther*, and in the first number of the Pacific Expositor; the former being worthy of a place in every gentleman's library, and the latter of a hearty welcome in every household and dwelling in the land.

There is, unless I am greatly mistaken, a deep and settled conviction, not only in the Church, but out of it, that, as a general thing, the preaching of our day is far from being imbued with the Bible as it ought to be; that while it is more æsthetical than formerly, and deals in much profound thought on morality and virtue, and employs much vivacity of expression, and indulges in much and even splendid declamation *about* the Bible, it is far from being *pervaded* with it; that while it revolves *around* the Bible, it is at so great a distance that it receives but little of its light, and scarcely more of its heat; that though it borrows much light from art and science, from philosophy and literature, it courts but little of that divine splendor that beams upon and illustrates all teaching that emanates from the pure Word of God; that with all the vast amount of preaching of the present day, the people's knowledge of the Bible is wholly inadequate; and that if they were left entirely to the utterances of the pulpit for their knowledge of it, it would be exceedingly limited, and in consecutiveness, next to nothing at all. "His sermons are very smooth, and elegant,, and interesting, but there is no *Bible* in them," is the too just and too common criticism passed upon the sermons of not a few popular preachers of the day, by many an unsatisfied and hungering hearer. It was in view of this prevalent custom of the modern pulpit, that Daniel Webster once remarked humorously but scathingly, that "the ministers of our time are accustomed to take their *texts* from St. Paul, and *preach* from the *newspapers!*" Want of a thorough Bible element in sermons is a just complaint. But how can it be otherwise, since the prevailing, almost the universal method is, to preach from a single verse, or a mere fragment of a verse, taken from the Scriptures it is true, but only serving as a motto for a moral essay, rather than legitimately containing and furnishing a theme for a sermon, preached in the name and by the authority of God.

Frequently the text requires no exposition at all and none is attempted, save some cursory remarks that serve as an introduction to the discourse that is to follow; remarks that might accompany any other similar text taken from any book of the Bible, without any reference to the connection in which it stands. Indeed, the topical method would not, as a general thing, answer the end aimed at, if it required much exposition. It is, in fact, one of the rules laid down by teachers of homiletics, to be careful *not* to select such texts. But allowing that there are some exceptions to this, and conceding another thing also, that the topical method has *its* advantages, and in its proper place and proportion may and *ought* to be used; yet it still remains true that where it predominates, and es-

pecially where it is the exclusive method, there is and can be but very little Bible exposition, and scarcely none at all in the order and connection in which the Holy Ghost hath dictated the Sacred Oracles. A volume of sermons, recently published by a celebrated and truly able divine beyond the mountains, is a good illustration of these remarks. Without endorsing all that those sermons contain, we may say that as specimens of pulpit orations, they have rarely been equaled. They contain much that is true; and, in felicity of illustration, and in eloquence of thought, and diction, they may be beyond criticism. The hearer might have been astonished at the power of the preacher, delighted with the beauty, the freshness, or the originality of his sentiments, or rapt in ecstasy by the eloquence of his glowing periods. The reader of them may rise from their perusal with fresher thoughts, a quickened intellect, a larger knowledge, and a high admiration of the genius of the gifted author. But after all, how much *exposition of the Bible*, which is our only rule of faith and practice, and the only book on earth that is able to make us wise unto salvation, do these sermons contain? How much Scripture has been illustrated, how many allusions, to the common reader unintelligible, explained—how much doctrine has been rescued from the hands of error, cleared of obscurity, proved from the Scriptures, and reconciled by a comparison of Scripture with Scripture? Scarcely none at all. A person might be an attentive hearer of such sermons during a whole life, and not derive from them as much knowledge of what the Bible really contains, as he would had he listened to the same preacher for only six months, while expounding any one of the more cardinal books of the Bible. Why, then, this "waste of precious ointment"—this constant turning to purposes that are merely literary in their character, such high faculties so long and so thoroughly disciplined—such stores of knowledge on all subjects—such ability of interpretation and "*reasoning out of the Scriptures*," and such power to make his congregation thoroughly biblical both in faith and practice? And if this style of preaching, even in its most faultless forms, and in its brightest measures of strength, is nearly fruitless in building up the people in a close and accurate knowledge of the Divine Oracles, how meagre and humiliating must be the result of the same method when in its ordinary and more humble exertions, it of necessity falls immeasurably below that!

The result is a lack everywhere—a sad and painful lack of a knowledge of that very Bible which is at once the foundation of all our spiritual hopes and the palladium of our civil freedom. Even in the very midst of all our vast machinery for evangelizing the world, such as Bi-

ble Societies, Bible Presses, and Bible distribution—in the midst of all our churches, and gorgeous cathedrals, and eloquent preaching, there is "a *famine* in the land—not a famine for bread nor a thirst for water, but of HEARING THE WORDS OF THE LORD;" and as if the prophet had our own age in his eye, he goes on to say;—"and they shall wander from sea to sea, and from the North even to the East, they shall run to and fro to seek the Word of the Lord, *and shall not find it.*"

Constant topical preaching, to say the least, is a doling out of the Bread of Life in *famine rations.* It is adding a vast amount of water to the pure milk of the Word, giving good ground for him thus spiritually fed to utter the complaint of Job,—"My leanness rising up in me *beareth witness to my face!*" This way of dispensing *Bible* truth to the world, is like limiting the earth to that amount of light which comes dimly flickering from the stars, and sending even that through a medium so dense as to be about as good as no light at all. Why should it be thought necessary to deal out the glowing truths of Inspiration in quantities so parsimonious and niggardly? Is the Divine Source so contracted and so easy to be exhausted, that the drafts upon it must be not only few but infinitesimally small? Why the great Sun has been shining day and night for many thousand years, throwing out its splendors in all directions, lighting up and warming the most distant planets, and flooding with its ineffable glories boundless regions of space besides, and yet it has lost no sensible portion of its glowing disk. Not less exhaustless is the Bible, the great Central Luminary of the moral world.

"A glory gilds the Sacred Page
Majestic like the Sun:—
It gives a light to every age—
It *gives*, but *borrows* none."

Does not such a fragmentary use of the Holy Scriptures, especially where it is nearly the exclusive method, fail to powerfully convict the understanding and alarm the conscience? Does not God refuse to honor that apparent slight of his Word? Has he not indeed signified his *displeasure* by withholding from it the converting power of his Holy Spirit? It was just here that the gifted and eloquent Larned felt the want of power, though he did not seem to know the cause of it. Said he, "There must be something wrong in my preaching. I can paint the sufferings of Christ on Sunday, so that my whole congregation shall weep, and on Monday morning, I hear them swear to my face." There *was* something wrong. What was it? The lack of genius? No. It was lack of a higher quality His published sermons show it. They lack

the baptism of the inspired Oracles. God withheld the signet of his approbation from so fragmentary an exhibition of his Word.

And let me ask, Does not this style of preaching tend to lure the ministry of our day into reading theology more in *other* books than in the Bible? And if so, what wonder that some, though claiming to be ambassadors of Christ, become the heralds of "*another* gospel," while many others "speak more to the brain than the consciences of their auditors?" What wonder that in making so much of man and so little of God, drawing its supplies so much from the "enticing words of man's wisdom," and so scantily from the inspired Word, the Pulpit should have lost much of its pristine power? And here it cannot be inappropriate to inquire how far this style of preaching is accountable not only for the great lack of thorough Bible Knowledge, but for much of the bigotry, fanaticism, error, and infidelity that have from time to time existed and still continue to prevail? Is it not a fact that after the introduction of the topical method, and it had become universal, a general ignorance of the Scriptures was superinduced, insomuch that the people lost all interest in them and tamely allowed an ambitious and godless priesthood to set aside the Pulpit and put in its place the Altar, and for *preaching*, the divinely appointed means for the conversion and salvation of the world, to substitute the *Mass?* And from that time, did not this general ignorance of the Scriptures prevail until at the Reformation the ancient method was restored to the Church? Is it not a fact that in Germany where the essay style of preaching has prevailed for the last one or two centuries, both preachers and hearers have become mystics, neologists, or pantheists? Is it not true that in England, also, where this method has long been in vogue, very many of those who were once orthodox, have become Socinian in their theology? And is not this eminently true of New England? And though throughout all those States they can boast of having one preacher to less than every six hundred souls, is it not also true, that on that very soil the rankest and most prolific kinds of error and infidelity have sprung up to curse the church and the world?

But let us consider some of the *Advantages* of the Expository method of preaching, and of which the topical method cannot easily avail itself.

1. It will, obviously, result in *a larger acquaintance with the contents of the Inspired Volume.* When the preacher, instead of building each sermon on an isolated sentence, or a part of a sentence, which, standing alone, gives no sense at all—an indignity put upon the Word of God which is too common—devotes a due proportion of his time to the practical exposition of paragraphs or chapters, or ascends to the regular ex-

position of some entire and prominent book of the Bible, his hearers will attain a richness, a variety, an extent and exuberance of divine knowledge which cannot be acquired by the ordinary process. It is true, that topical sermons admit of a more popular style of elocution and a higher degree of ornament, and are, therefore, adapted to please the ear and captivate the fancy; but not being "*reasoned out of the Scriptures*," they fail to instruct in any adequate degree, the hearer in the great themes of the Revealed Word. Besides, in this way he is likely to make some parts of his instructions *much more*, others *much less* prominent than God has made them. Men of one idea always do this. Highly polished sermons of this character, says Baxter, "are like painted glass in windows, *which keep out the light.*" They are, though without any such design, ecclesiastical contrivances—ministerial *lenses*, so constructed as not to concentrate, but to disperse the light that radiates from God's great Luminary of the moral world.

2. But the Expository Method will result necessarily, not only in a *larger*, but *truer* knowledge of the Bible. On any subject, in order to see the truth correctly, we must see it in its various *connections*. And this *is* attained in regular, systematic exposition of the Bible. In this way we do not see truth from a single stand-point, but from many—not only one, but *all* sides of it—not only at a distance, but in close contact with it:—we not only get the scent of it, but we *inhale* it as we do the atmosphere. In this way its life-giving waters come not to us through the rank soil of error and unbelief, nor trickling in rare drops through the granite ledge of some metaphysical disquisition; but we slake our thirst from the pure stream hard by the Divine and exhaustless *Fountain*. In this way the truths of the Bible are seen to be not discordant, but harmonious; for they are seen in their due proportions and connections. Error flies before them as the shades of night before the sun. Before an *expounded* Bible, as an oft-beaten foe before a park of artillery, infidelity is cowardly, falters, and retreats, or strikes its colors and surrenders. Besides, it will protect the church itself from error; for, the minister exhibiting *in its order* that "which the Holy Ghost hath taught"—having his chart constantly before him—his path marked out by "the finger of God"—shut up to preaching what God bids him—it will be difficult for him, without immediate detection, to substitute his own views for those of the Scriptures, or to make them a party to his own errors. It is the *fragmentary* style of treating the Scriptures, that gives error its greatest advantage. It is that which has led to more perversions of the Holy Oracles, and has done more to en-

gender and perpetuate the blindness of error, and stimulate the hate and the ferocity of the bigot, and kindle the fires of fanaticism, both religious, ecclesiastical, and political, than all other causes combined. It is that which has led to so many unhappy and wicked divisions in the Christian Church. Had the Bible been always treated in a rational way, much bitter and unholy controversy had never arisen to distract, divide, and tear the Body of Christ, and the Church would have furnished all the martyrs, and Cæsar all the persecutors and executioners.

3. The Method furnishes the preacher *with a much larger variety of topics.* The textual preacher, unless he be a man of uncommon mind and versatility of genius, will be continually repeating himself. Unconsciously to himself, but most obviously to those who hear him, he wil constantly tread the same circle, easily sweeping through one whole sign of its zodiac each Sabbath; at the end of the twelfth, if not sooner, he will be ready to start out again on the same unvaried round. I have heard of some who possessed the wonderful capacity of traveling the entire circumference of their system *twice* regularly *every* Sabbath. But the quintessence of all such sermons must be *meagerness, sterility, emptiness.* Now this ought not so to be, so long as the preacher is allowed to draw his instructions fresh from the Revealed Word of the All-wise God, which may be so expounded, if we only knew how, as to be felt to be the most interesting as well as the most valuable book in the world. And if, by the grace of God, the preacher shall thoroughly understand it —so thoroughly as to drink deeply of its inspiration, and feel the loftiness and divinity of its sentiments,—to all which this course will give a greater *stimulus*—it would clothe the utterances of the pulpit with unwonted freshness, originality, and power, proving that the word of the Lord "is like *a fire,* and like *a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces*" —a weapon against sin and all the enemies of God, "sharper than any two-edged sword," and "*mighty to the pulling down of strong holds.*"

4. It is a method purely *Protestant* in its character. Not simply because the Reformers practiced it, but because it gives to the people an Open Bible. An *expounded* Bible is neither cloistered, padlocked, nor chained. Its portals are thrown open, and no decree of councils, and no bull of Popes, can close them. No anathema against "private interpretation" is placarded at its threshold. It is the common property of the world, and the people have a right to it. It teaches them not only their duties but their privileges—not only their obligations, but their rights, both temporal and spiritual. The Bible is man's great Friend in the State as well as in the Church—in things earthly as well as in things

heavenly. Men who thoroughly understand the Bible can never be enslaved, either ecclesiastically or politically. That degradation and wrong can be felt only by those against whom the Bible has been shut, bolted, and barred. Those who know the Bible best are both the Lord's freemen and Cæsar's freemen. And if this be so, then any method of preaching which shall the most fully lay open the provisions of that Magna Charter of God, ought to be neither discarded, nor thrust into a subordinate place. Leave that, Brethren, to those who persecute, imprison, torture, and martyr (where they can and dare) such as presume to read the Bible for themselves; leave that to those who have substituted the Altar for the Pulpit; the Mass for Preaching; Rituals and the "traditions of men" for the Word of God; and prayers to a creature, for those which should be offered to God only.

5. The Expository Method *exalts God.* But, as a frequent thing, it is not so with the opposite method. There, too often, *man* is prominent, if not uppermost—and that too whether strong or feeble; for dullness never reminds us of God. Seldom does splendid talent. Too often, the *man* that possesses it, is the deity in our thought; and thus he overshadows the real Deity. We wonder at the extent and readiness of his knowledge—the grasp of his intellect—the corruscations of his genius, and are borne away, as on eagle's wings, by the power of his elocution. Our thought is mainly on the *preacher;* and *God* is a *secondary* object in the mind. And how can it be otherwise? for in many sermons the text is about the only Scripture in them; or if not, what there is besides seems to have been interpolated to save the sermon from the stigma of being called a mere literary essay. It is like reading at your leisure, in a book, an elaborate description of the workings of Providence. You are pleased with it as a mere literary production; and you think all the time what a brilliant writer the author is. Himself is the hero. But go out under the open heavens whence the book should have drawn its inspiration. Behold the Sun in his glory, or the planets blazing in their orbits. Look up at the majestic sweep of the Constellations—every star a sun and centre of other systems. They declare the glory of God. They show His handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech of *Him:* night unto night showeth knowledge of *Him.* Behold the flowers whose beauty no book can describe, no limner paint. Behold hill and dale waving with golden harvests, or laden with the luscious fruits of Autumn, and everywhere that mysterious thing called *animal life*, investing the whole scene with a still deeper interest. In all these you talk face to face with a God of boundless wisdom and

goodness. Or, bare your breast to the storm that rages above and around you. Let the fierce lightnings flash in your face, and dazzle, and blind your vision. Let the heavy crash of the thunder break over your head and rumble along the ethereal vault till the solid earth trembles and quakes beneath your feet; and you forget both book and author. You feel that you are in the presence of the Almighty. Your mind is overwhelmed with a sense of his grandeur and terrible majesty. No room for any other thought. It is so with God as seen in the Bible. If it be rightly expounded, he is the all-absorbing object there—an object not only of adoration, but admiration, and love. And the devout hearer exclaims with the Psalmist: "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire besides Thee."

6. The Expository Method will *compel*, and at the same time *assist* the preacher to greater *fidelity*. It will give him the best of all opportunities to enforce those doctrines and duties which are more or less unwelcome to the human heart, and which he is under a strong temptation to keep back. We have reason to believe that under the topical method, many very stern though plain teachings of the Bible have been withheld, or wholly surrendered; for, in order to bring an unwelcome truth into disrepute, disbelief, or final *rejection*, it is not necessary to preach *against* it: you have only *to let it alone* for a few years, and nobody in your congregation will believe it. To this neglect the common method of practising affords great facility. Indeed the topical preacher needs *never* touch those portions of the Bible which he knows are unpopular, if so he chooses; for, by that method, he finds himself at liberty to select what subjects he pleases, and to decline to discuss such as he knows will be likely to offend. That this is sometimes done there can be no doubt. But the preacher who treats the Scriptures as Christ and his Apostles were wont to do, *cannot*, if he would, evade this responsibility. He is compelled to utter what the Bible *in its connections* teaches. Here he is shut up to "declaring ALL the counsel of God," whether welcome or unwelcome to his hearers: whether it be a doctrine "hard to be understood," and from which the pride of man revolts; or whether it demands the culture of virtues to which men are bitterly opposed; or thunders its anathemas against the vices in which they delight to indulge, and to part with which, is like cutting off a right hand or plucking out a right eye. And what shall he do in such cases? Shall he *ignore* these teachings—*avoid*—"*shun* to declare them? By the topical method he *can*, if so he elects; and it is just here that temptation assails him the most powerfully; and if his conscience is

not under the absolute control of principle, he will be likely to yield to the temptation. But though he does *not* yield; but faithfully presents these unwelcome themes in due frequency and proportion; yet, under the topical method, he *still* labors under great disadvantages. For when he selects out of the whole Bible a solitary verse, or fragment of a verse, even though it contain the doctrine or duty he wishes to enforce; yet, many of his hearers will think that he selected that very text in order to have a *Thus saith the Lord*, for inflicting on them some speculation in theology, or some hobby in morals, to which he is particularly wedded; or to chastise some of his ecclesiastical, political, or personal opposers. But when these topics come up for discussion in the regular and consecutive exposition of some extended portion, or entire book of the Bible, no such suspicion will exist, and no such unfavorable feelings will be created. His hearers will then see and feel that it is not the *preacher*, but *God*, who is teaching them doctrines which they do not like; enforcing virtues which they denounce as severe and puritanical, and rebuking them for their sins: that it is *God* who is ferreting out their hiding-places, discovering their iniquities, and exposing their false-heartedness to the light of day; that it is God who is undermining their spurious hopes, demolishing their "refuges of lies," and tearing away the veil from their hypocrisy. They will feel in their hearts that the *preacher* is not responsible for the ill-feelings which such truths engender in their bosoms; that he is but doing his duty as an honest and faithful expounder of God's own Word; and that if they are disposed to have a quarrel at all, it must be not with the *preacher*, but with *God*, their Maker, Law-giver, Ruler, and Judge. And, as a general thing, if the preacher pursues this course, he will be sustained. For the higher nature of man demands honest and faithful preaching. Men know well that infidelity here is more than treason—it is sacrilege—a betrayal of the highest trust committed to mortals. On this subject of ministerial fidelity, New England's great orator once said: "I want my pastor to come to me in the spirit of the Gospel, saying, You are mortal. Your probation is brief. Your work must be done speedily. You are *immortal*, too. You are hastening to the bar of God. The Judge standeth at the door." Such is the real sentiment of the human heart everywhere. And though men may, and will flinch under the searching application of Scriptural truth; yet, if the preacher comes to them, not with a *fragmentary*, but a *whole* Bible, so that they can see that by plain and connected interpretation, and comparison of Scripture with Scripture, he hath a positive *Thus saith the Lord*, for

what he proclaims in their hearts, they will respect and thank him for his fidelity, though they go away from him and forsake him.

7. And this Method gives the word preached greater *power*. Let the great themes of the Bible be faithfully presented in their proper relations and proportions, and it will bring the congregation more directly under the searching "power of the world to come." It will surround and invest men's lives with the solemn realities of death, judgment, and eternity. It will make them feel that there is a God working about and within them, and whom they are to meet at the last tribunal. It will show them their guilt and wretchedness, their destitution and inevitable ruin, without a Redeemer. It will make them feel the *need* of just such a Redeemer as the Scriptures portray. It will point them to that Redeemer, and present him to them in all his glorious characters, and show him to be adequate, and that he alone *is* adequate, to undertake and accomplish the task of their redemption; and that if not redeemed by him, they perish forever. Such are some of the realities with which this mode of presenting truth will crowd their minds, either to inspire their hopes, alarm their fears, or arouse their consciences. It will make them feel that "the silver cord" has only to be "loosed," the "golden bowl broken," the vail of the flesh rent away, and they will ascend to the joys of heaven, or sink into the miseries of hell. On these fearful realities thus proved, and *seen*, and *felt* to be proved, the preacher can base the most cogent arguments, and the tenderest appeals that can be addressed to an immortal soul.

So the Great Teacher taught. "Beginning at Moses and all the prophets," and "expounding unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself," what power had Jesus Christ! And it raised the splendid encomium: "Never man spake like this man." They wondered at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth." "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures?"

So Peter preached at Pentecost, and his auditors "were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and the rest of the Apostles, Men and brethren, WHAT SHALL WE DO?" "And the same day there were added unto the church about three thousand souls." And a little further on it is stated, "And the Lord added unto the church daily such as should be saved." And after this style, so far as we know anything further about him, he *always* preached.

Thus, too, Stephen preached; and neither the philosophers, nor the turbulent mob who, "cut to the heart" by the fidelity of his preaching,

"gnashed on him with their teeth," and clamored for his life, "were able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake."

It was because *Apollos* was "*mighty* in the Scriptures" that he "*mightily confounded the Jews*, and that publicly, *showing by the Scriptures* that Jesus is the Christ."

And our text is a happy illustration of the power which this Method gives to the word preached. Paul "reasoned with" the Thessalonians "*out of the Scriptures, opening and alleging*," or *expounding and quoting them* as proof, that the suffering and crucified Jesus of Nazareth whom he preached, was the long expected Messiah. *And what was the result?* Just this: that not only some of the *Jews*, who were the most stubborn and violent opposers of the Gospel, "*believed*," and took sides with Paul and Silas, but "of the devout Greeks *a great multitude*, and of the chief women not a few."

And such was his method, and such the power that attended that method, whenever he preached. Employing this method, even when first converted, he "confounded the Jews who dwelt at Damascus, *proving that this is very Christ*." Thus he preached at Antioch in Pisidia, taking for his text not an isolated sentence of Scripture, but the passage from the Law and the Prophets, which the Master of the Synagogue had read for that day's lesson. (See *Acts* xiii.) And again we ask; What was the result? Why, many of the Jews and proselytes were converted, and *even the Gentiles*, so great was the effect upon them, "besought that these words might be preached to them the next Sabbath." His preaching told on the populace. God put honor on the faithful exposition of his Truth. "*And the next Sabbath day came almost the whole city together to hear the Word of God.*" And it was while he expounded the Scriptures, and "reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come," that even — "*Felix trembled.*" And when brought before Festus and Agrippa, he tells them plainly that his belief and his teachings were founded on those "things which the prophets and Moses did say should come;" and so cogent and logical was his exposition of those Scriptures, and such divine power attended it, that the rude Governor cried out, that the manacled but bold and eloquent preacher before him, was "*beside himself;* and the crowned monarch that sat enthroned by the Governor's side, in admiration of such glowing truths, enforced by a superhuman power, exclaimed, "Paul, almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian."

Thus presented, such was the power of Divine Truth in the First Century. If presented in a similar manner, with the same zeal, and

faith, and self-denial; why may not effects *somewhat* similar be produced in the Nineteenth Century? Is the Word of God any less "a fire, and a hammer" now than in the days of the prophets? Has the "*sword of the Spirit*" been blunted by long use? Has the Word ceased to be "quick and powerful?" Has it ceased to be "*profitable*—for doctrine, for reproof, for correction in righteousness?" Has it in these last days become inadequate to "furnish the man of God unto all good works?" Has the Truth in our age, lost its power to "make" the bondman of the Devil "free?" Impossible. The Word of God, like its divine Author, is the same in essence now as ever. If its latent power is not developed, it must be because the ordained conditions are not complied with. There is the same power in the air, and dew, and rain, and in the sun's light and heat to produce a crop of grain now, as when the promise was first made that "seed time and harvest should never cease." But the *soil* must be *broken up and cultured*, not cumbered with flowers, however beautiful, nor paved with polished stones and sparkling gems. The seed must be *sown*, not "hid in a napkin," nor in the "*skeletons*" and mummies of by-gone ages. Let it find its way into the soil well broken up after the ancient style, and let it be scattered with the liberality of Apostolic times, and perchance, the Great Husbandman will make all our waste places white with a plenteous harvest.

Should an invading army lay siege to a fortified town, and calculate on success by a grand display of harmless pyrotechnics, or by hurling into the beleaguered city a multitude of curiously wrought arrows, velvet pointed, and other fantastic missiles; they might amuse, but could not alarm, least of all, vanquish the besieged. But there is a latent power that *can* do it. It is hidden in a few black grains of an explosive compound. If the conditions are fulfilled, they can hurl into that town iron balls and exploding shells that will soon bring the rebels to terms.

Polished sermons of the essay style, founded on fragments of Scripture, may furnish the wondering crowd with very good specimens of ecclesiastical pyrotechnics, and many missiles of elaborate workmanship; but they are withal, as such things ought to be, very harmless to those at whom they are aimed. But the Bible is God's great Arsenal; it contains power adequate to great moral results. When the conditions are fulfilled; when its vast stores of materials are properly used, that power is exerted. Then, every truth is a "*helmet of salvation*" to the spiritual warrior — a "*breastplate*," proof against the thrusts of the enemy — a "*shield*" to "quench all the fiery darts of the Devil." And so also, as *against* the foe, every truth, if rightly used, is "*a fire to*

melt, and a hammer to break in pieces;" a "*two-edged sword,*" to slay the man of sin; a polished shaft to pierce to the quick, and a bolt of thunder to scathe, the reckless foes of God, and blast every false hope.

And the preacher should not, through indolence, or for any other cause, allow that great Arsenal of God to be closed, and *kept* closed, and content himself with talking about what it contains; but on every return to the assault of sin, he should throw its doors wide open. He should be anxious to put into the hands of every friend of God, all the weapons of his spiritual warfare, both offensive and defensive. He should not content himself with amusing the foes of God by an elaborate description of those weapons, telling them how sharp or deadly they would be, provided they had a chance: but by hurling them into their serried ranks, he should make them *feel* their power: he should let them *experience* what weapons forged by the hand and hurled by the power of Omnipotence, can do. "*Mighty through God,*" would be their humble confession.

But, blessed be God, his Word is not for *destruction*, but *salvation*. It destroys nothing but sin. In that Armory there are no *poisoned* darts. Every arrow is dipped in atoning blood and winged with mercy. The "fire that melts" is from God's altar, and only burns away the dross while it refines the gold. The "hammer that breaks the rock in pieces" is wielded by a benevolent Hand. "I kill and I make alive: I wound and I heal," saith God. "The Almighty maketh sore and bindeth up: He woundeth, and His hands make whole." Yes, bound up in the same bundle with all those weapons of our spiritual warfare, is the Balm of Gilead, to heal every moral malady, to assuage every pain, and staunch every bleeding wound. And there, too, is the Great Physician. He restores and redeems "the slain of the Lord." He sendeth forth his Spirit to breathe upon the dry bones, and they live. His touch is life: His look is health, and joy, and peace; for He is the same as when, "God manifest in the flesh," He gave sight to the blind, health to the sick, life to the dead, and pardon to the guilty: the same whose "blood" even now "cleanseth from all sin," and who "ever liveth to make intercession for us."

And if this be so; if the Word of God is so full, and rich, and mighty; — as against evil, and in favor of good, the most formidable power known to earth; let us, Brethren, endeavor to understand it better, and drink more deeply of its spirit: let us "covet the best gifts" it contains: let us strive, by the aid of God, to be "*mighty* in the Scriptures;" and in all our ministrations let us endeavor to "handle

the Word of God" as to make our churches and our congregations more familiar with its contents than with any other book, and strive so to present each message, that they shall feel as if they were talking with God face to face.

And if we are faithful, we have a most precious promise to encourage us. Our labor in the Lord shall not be in vain. God will put honor on his Word: He will clothe its proclamation with power. "For," saith the Lord, "As the rain cometh down, and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater; so shall my Word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

EXPOSITORY PREACHING.

For several years, and at different times we have been asked for rules and directions by which young ministers could be aided in acquiring ease and power in expository preaching, and since the appearance of the Expositor several brethren in the ministry have requested me to write a volume or at least an article on the subject, and to recommend authors as specimens. It is our purpose to give some attention, if the Lord will, to their request, as soon as we can possibly get a little time to devote to it. In the meantime, let it be understood

1. That conversion to God is the object aimed at in all true preaching, and that the agent of this work is the Holy Spirit, and the instrument is the Truth of God. It is then the great business of a preacher of the Gospel who desires to save the souls of men, to preach the Divine Word. He has nothing to tell to the people except what God has revealed to him by his Word and Spirit, and commanded him to preach to them.

2. The preacher must, therefore, be full of the Divine Word himself. He must be mighty in the Scriptures, and able to show unto the people the way of salvation according to the Scriptures. He must then understand the Scriptures, their language and idioms, and the customs and habits, geography and history alluded to in the Scriptures.

3. He must be able to read the Divine Word with such distinctness, utterance and emphasis, that the people can hear him and understand him. Many ministers do not know how to read—very few do. The

division of our Bibles into chapters and verses, though of great importance, is a disadvantage in the public reading of the Scriptures. A distinctly marked paragraph Bible is better.

4. It is a great mistake — and yet I fear a common one — to think that if a man has not had time to write a sermon, "he can just take up a chapter and lecture on it." He may, indeed, deliver an harangue — he may talk about something, but he must be a very extraordinary man if he can jump in that way into the true meaning of Scripture, and draw out its rich treasures in such style and manner as may illuminate and warm his hearers. This style of lecturing has been often attempted, and has almost always failed! *It requires more study and more careful preparation and discipline of mind to lecture successfully on the Scriptures*, than it does to preach in the ordinary way on themes or texts. An able expository preacher must be familiar with the text and the most approved translations and the methods of the best interpretors— be full of the subject, and inspired with its unction.

5. The name of commentators is legion, but there are only a few names that occur to me at the moment as good models of expository preachers, and perhaps we are the more in favor of these than of others equally good, only because we are better acquainted with them. The authors we prefer as specimens of expository preaching are Leighton on Peter; Bishop Wilson on Colossians; Daille on Philipians and Colossians, and Calvin's Commentaries. Byefield on Colossians and Peter is also good. Every pastor should also have Vinet's Pastoral Theology, and Gospel Studies. They are of great value. Chalmers on Romans is also a great work — if not the very best that great man ever wrote. Owen on Hebrews is almost a complete library in itself. Leighton should be studied all the time.

THE SYNOD OF THE PACIFIC.

This body met on the fourth inst. in the First Presbyterian Church of this city. The opening sermon was preached by the Rev. George Burrowes, D. D., from Heb. 1: 3, "Christ Jesus the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person." To say that the sermon was well conceived and happily executed—learned, able and scholarly, and well directed in its presentation of great and precious truth, is only to say what all who know Dr. Burrowes expected. The object of the preacher was to show that as the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of his person, the Lord Jesus Christ is the Shekinah of the Church in all ages. In bringing out this sublime announcement, we were told, 1. That the text teaches the Divinity of the Lord Jesus. He is the true Shekinah.

2. That Jesus is above all principalities and powers, and that he is the Creator of all things. 3. That Christ is the Guardian of God's holy law. 4. Christ is the only medium of communication between man and God. 5. That Christ Jesus gives wisdom, instruction and grace to his people by his Holy Spirit. 6. That Christ is the Protector and Comfortor of his people, and *Finally*, That Jesus Christ is the light and glory of heaven.

After the sermon the Synod was constituted with prayer by the Moderator, Rev. Dr. Anderson. There were present *thirteen* ministers and five ruling elders. The whole number of ministers belonging to this Synod is twenty-seven having about twenty churches under its care.

The Rev. S. Woodbridge, D. D. of the Presbytery of Benicia, was unanimously elected Moderator, and the Rev. Peter V. Veder temporary clerk. The Rev. Dr. Woodbridge on taking the chair, made some touching and eloquent remarks. He returned thanks to the reverend Body, for the honor conferred upon him, and expressed his sense of unfitness for the office, and especially his want of experience in Ecclesiastical bodies, having spent most of his life at frontier posts. He alluded also, in a most effective style to our feeble beginning on this coast in 1849, and to what God had done for us. And though oppressed with a sense of unworthiness, he ventured to accept the honor of presiding over their deliberations, trusting to the kindness of his brethren to aid him, and especially hoping that God who had heretofore done so great things for us, would be with us and bless us.

The meetings of the Synod were characterized by a christian spirit, though on some points there was a difference of opinion. Among the great questions which were considered, none was of more importance than that of Education. After mature deliberation, the Synod by a large vote resolved to establish a *Grammar School, as the beginning of a College or University in this city*, and recommended Rev. Dr. Burrowes as Principal, and the Rev. Albert Williams as general financial agent. It is expected that the school will begin in a few weeks, at least by the first Monday of November. The Synod also adopted the resolutions of the last General Assembly in regard to the Sabbath, and adopted an appendix. We were in favor of doing just what the last Assembly did, but not in favor of the appendix. The Synod also, in adopting the language of the General Assembly of 1854, on the question of introduciug the Bible into our Public Schools, expressed our views precisely—the very views which we have advocated so repeatedly, viz: "Resolved, That this Synod in the adoption of the resolution in relation to the introduction of the Bible in Public Schools, does not intend to favor its *compulsory use, by law*, in such schools."

We consider the meeting of the Synod a most happy and important one for our church on this coast. We shall give a summary of the minutes in our next number.

Ecclesiastical Meetings. The annual meetings of the Methodist Conference of the Church South, and of the Congregational Association of this State, and of the Synods of the New, and of the Old School Presbyterian Churches, have just closed their services in this city. As far as we have learned, their meetings have been harmonious, and from their action and reports, it is to be inferred that the cause of religion is advancing among us. Of our own Synod, that of the Pacific, we shall have more to say at another time.

Our Contributors must have a little patience with us. We have been obliged to adopt the miller's rule—"first come first served," if the wheat is equally good. As a general rule we do not desire articles to extend over more than four pages. Our age is a spasmodic, telegram age, and long articles are not read, and consequently do not exert the same influence that short ones do. *We do not wish to pay for the printing of a single useless word.* We have much valuable matter on hand for our next number. The leading article will be a discourse from Rev. W. E. Boardman, author of "The Higher Life."

The Synod of the New School Presbyterian Church met in this city on the 4th inst. We hope to be able to publish extracts from their proceedings in our next number. The very able, eloquent and appropriate sermon of Rev. S. S. Harmon, delivered at their opening session, is found entire in this number.

Doctor of Divinity. Lafayette College at Easton, Penn., at its late commencement honored itself by conferring the *degree of Doctor of Divinity* upon the Rev. Sylvester Woodbridge, Jr., of Benicia, Cal.

LITERARY RECORD.

Greece and Russia. By Bayard Taylor. New York.—G. P. Putnam. San Francisco.—H. H. Bancroft & Co.

The San Francisco publishers, Messrs. H. H. Bancroft & Co., 151 Montgomery street, have laid this last work of Bayard Taylor on our table. It is in every respect like, and equal unto all the other volumes of Taylor, (and Bancroft has them all,) and no library is complete without them. Doubtless the thousands who have heard Mr. Taylor's recent lectures, will avail themselves of this convenient and cheap method of retaining the gentleman as a companion, who may at their convenience oft discourse to them of his "hair-breadth escapes i' the field and flood," from Polar seas to Tropical deserts. For Bayard Taylor's own sake, we are half inclined to think it is a pity the lions did not eat him in Africa, or the Polar snows bury him. For what can he do? He is older than Alexander, but there are no more worlds for him to conquer, unless he could get inside of our planet, or under our oceans and explore them; and when he does and comes back to tell us, "may we be there," and then when he prints may we have his notes to read. And by the way we see that his experience among the Cretans, confirms Epimenides and Saint Paul, or else they confirm him, which is about the same thing, for travelers need some corroboratives. And again, we see that he has found out that Napoleon is neither a Frenchman nor an Italian, but a Spartan. We suspected this long ago! In his wanderings he comes upon a town called Vitylo, where he learns that the Mainotes long ago emigrated to Corsica, and among them was a Spartan family by the name of Kalomeros, who changed their name on going to Corsica to its Italian equivalent, which is *Bounaparte*. That old Spartan blood has made history—nor is the chapter yet complete.

Idyls of the King. By Tennyson.—Ticknor & Fields, Boston.

Bancroft & Co., have also sent us a work with the above title.

To be a poet-laureate is something, and to be printed so neatly is something; but we are not very fond of *Idols*, nor *Idlers*, nor *Idyls*. We like the old romance, or the ballad better. Chevy Chace, or the Roman lays, are like the sound of battle in a warrior's ears. Tennyson is a poet, however, and will be read. The Idyls of this volume are *Enid*, *Viviene*, *Elaine* and *Guinevere*.

The Fireside Monthly, by Dr. W. W. Hall, editor of Hall's Journal of Health, New York, for September, is on our table. It is lively, clear, health-giving. Like the "Journal of Health," it is addressed to men's common sense, and is of an elevating tendency. The articles are not too long, and never heavy, and always fit for all the members of a family to read. We wish it had a million of paying subscribers. The article on "Reformers" is to our mind exactly; we hope to find room for it in our next number.

Our Eastern Exchanges.—We have already returned our thanks to the *Press* on this coast for their kind greetings, and we have also given in our last number a few specimens of the way in which the Expositor is esteemed in the interior. We are able now to add, that as far as we have seen, our Eastern Exchanges are highly complimentary towards the Expositor, both as to its style and subject-matter, and all agree that it is a work greatly needed on this coast. As a specimen of many we give below a few lines from the *Presbyterian Banner and Advocate* of Pittsburgh, (Rev. Dr. McKinney.)

"The Pacific Expositor.—This is a new candidate for the favor of Presbyterians, but not a *beggar* for sustenance. It needs sustenance, and must have it or perish; but it indicates both purpose and ability, fully to give *quid pro quo*. The *Expositor* is a monthly of fifty pages, edited by Rev. W. A. Scott, D. D., and published by George W. Stevens, Esq., San Francisco, Cal. It is well got up, and filled with excellent matter. It will be a blessing to the people of the States on the Pacific, and will, we would trust, have the opportunity of doing great good on the East of the Rocky Mountains."

Union Book Store. Several volumes from Messrs. Allen & Spier, were laid on our table just as we were going to press. They shall receive attention in due time.

"The Friend" of Honolulu, is considerably exercised, lest by mistake or otherwise we should minister homeopathic doses to him in stray papers. He need not be alarmed. We have sent him an *allopathic* dose, and if he can be persauded to take it just as it is, we have some hope of him. We fear, however, that his constitution and climate are so bad, and especially his early habits, that we can do him but little good. Still, we shall have the satisfaction, whether we succeed in curing him of certain long standing, chronic complaints or not, that we have meant well, and sent him a powerful dose. And at all events, we have great respect and kindness for him, and hope his shadow may never be less, although we could wish his prejudices were.